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INTERIM REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE URBAN DISTRICT OF MARKET DRAYTON FOR THE YEAR 1939.

1939 was marked by the change from peace to war conditions. On account of this, plans made in the earlier part of the year, had, to some extent, to be relegated to make way for more urgent emergency measures which had to be dealt with as they arose. Thus it was that although health progress was limited there was no lessening of work in the Sanitary Department. Air Raid Precautions, under the control of the County Council, with its many ramifications, made frequent demands on the time of the Sanitary Inspector and, at first, this necessitated some reorganisation. With the stabilisation of conditions it is expected that such public health work as will not entail much reconstruction or the use of material on a large scale will be able to be undertaken.

POPULATION. Early in September the town was called on to receive its quota of Evacuees. In this case the people came from Manchester and comprised two classes:- mothers with infants, and school-children. Generally, the response of the inhabitants was good and the foster-parents were prepared to go to considerable lengths in welcoming the newcomers and in making them comfortable. The class of person received was usually of the lower working class. These people, accustomed to less generous modes of life than those of their like in the country did not settle well and in many cases returned home after a brief stay. These who did remain were in many instances the cause of complaint. Amongst matters which gave rise to such complaints were :- a lack of cleanliness of person, a failure to use household furnishings reasonably with resultant damage. It was unfortunate that a community, prepared to offer their best services in difficult times, should do so with such disappointing results. The emergency conditions of the Country has had its effect on this neighbourhood and the Town has been called on to make certain provision for housing military personnel and also for their entertainment. The local Authority has provided improved facilities for amusement and the Y.M.C.A. offers hospitality. In some instances the families of soldiers have come to the Town with the men and accommodation has had to be found. Labour in the neighbourhood has been plentiful and in addition to the demand for apartments for the above there has been considerable request for lodgings. The daily population shows some increase and trade has been good but the receipts from the local market have declined.

LABORATORY FACILITIES. No calls had to be made on the Emergency Health Laboratory which has been established in Wellington.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES. With the association of a First Aid Post in the Town the ambulances provided for this service gives increased facilities.

WATER SUPPLIES. Analysis of the supply from the company owners are required quarterly and have been reported on favorably.

SWIMMING BATHS. Considerable advantage is taken of the facilities available and the baths are well patronised. In addition to the use by local townsfolk, certain privileges have been extended to soldiers in the district and these have been appreciated. Samples of the water are taken during the season for analysis and the reports on these have been quite good. A system of chlorination has been in use for some time which, with the circulatory nature of the supply, helps to maintain purity. With the baths well patronised the Council might consider, when times are more propitious, the adoption of a stable form of purification which will make for improved hygiene at very little increased cost.

SEWAGE. All new houses in the area have been connected to the sewers and, in the case of the Dalelands Estate, a new sewer will be laid. Some readjustment of the sewerage system of the houses in the Bentleys Road area is necessary and will receive attention: this will bring certain houses on to the water-carriage system. The disposal works are acting efficiently but excessive storm conditions give rise to difficulties in certain districts in dealing with increased volumes of water. To meet this problem and to prevent back-pounding it may be necessary to install storm-water overflows, relief sewers and anti-flood valves etc. A new combined sewer, now at point of completion laid on the Dale Lands Estate will by a system of storm water overflow weirs constructed at the Sewage Works and in the Town Well District, benefit and prevent flooding in that area.

HOUSING. Major development to meet any outstanding cases of over-crowding or slum clearance was curtailed with the onset of hostilities. Nevertheless, it has been found possible to start building on a small estate at Daleland to erect some 100 houses for military personnel, and, in addition, 12 houses at the Kings Head Estate were allowed to be completed. A certain amount of general repair and improvement has been able to be carried out but this has been very limited.

MILK AND DAIRIES. When conditions permit a certain amount of re-conditioning and reconstruction will be necessary to bring farm-building and dairies up to standard. At present there are few accredited farms in the area.

FOOD PRODUCTION AND PREPARATION. To permit the granting of licences for premises for the above some alterations and improvements on the buildings have had to be carried out. One case, outstanding, will require to be held over.

MEAT INSPECTION. Generally the quality of the meat has been of a high standard and the Sanitary Inspector reports that little disease has been found. With the emergency regulations centralised, slaughtering has removed all killing from the town. The Sanitary Inspector's chief concern now is to prevent any inferior meat being brought or sold in the town.

PREVENTION OF DISEASE. During the year there has been no marked change in the incidence of infectious disease. There has been a slight rise in the number of cases of Scarlet Fever but this has been compensated by the absence of Diphtheria. New regulations came into force in the latter part of the year making the notification of Measles and Whooping Cough compulsory. No cases of Measles were brought to notice and there was a practical absence of Whooping Cough. As a result of the great drive and the satisfactory response in the recent diphtheria immunisation campaign the children now asking for protection are few in numbers: applicants are chiefly new school-children and a certain number under school-age.

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